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Students battle for annual bragging rights at the chess championship in Gelnhausen. See page 28.

Herald Union



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Serving the military communities of the 104th Area Support Group

May 25, 2004

ASGs, BSBs to merge

Army garrisons to be restructured by summer 2005

Over the course of the next year the Installation Management Agency-Europe will restructure to align with the U.S. Army installation management structure worldwide, known as the Standard Garrison Organization.

IMA-E will focus particularly on those locations where there are adjacent headquarters conducting similar missions. IMA-E will reorganize its operations in Heidelberg, Hanau, Würzburg-Kitzingen, and Grafenwöhr-Vilseck by consolidating the base support functions and mission of the local Base Support Battalions with those of their Area Support Group headquarters which are located in the same or nearby cities.

Commanders are currently assessing their missions and courses of action to seamlessly accomplish this goal by the end of fiscal year 2005.

Implementation of these actions will be transparent to community members with the goal of continued quality services and support for Soldiers and their families, IMA-E officials said.

The mergers are needed in large part to meet higher headquarters'

directives from Washington to change some 550 of 1,000 military positions in Army Europe communities to civilian positions.

The effort is part of an Army-wide initiative to take as many Soldiers out of garrison communities as possible — where they perform duties that could be done by civilians — and put them into the Army's combat units.

The change will be done, based on a review of individual positions, as military personnel depart for their next assignments.

Simultaneously in fiscal year 2005 IMA-E officials will look at reducing as many as 350 U.S. and local national civilian positions out of more than 10,000 in Europe, as a result of higher headquarters' direction to decrease civilian staff by 4 percent.

IMA-E officials plan to effect the reduction through attrition as current permanent employees retire or return to the States, or temporary employees reach the end of their period of employment.

The action is based on guidance from the Department of the Army.

The three simultaneous actions — merging Base Support Battal-

ions with Area Support Group headquarters at several locations, converting military positions to civilian positions, and reducing civilian personnel in Army communities by 4 percent — will require position-by-position reviews over the next year.

The mergers may involve some civilian positions being moved to other Army communities to redistribute work and expertise, while job responsibilities of other positions may change. The overall number of U.S. and local national civilian positions is expected to increase somewhat once the three actions are completed.

Though a significant change in organization and structure, the three actions are not related to transformation or Department of Defense global positioning. They also will not entail facility closures.

While accomplishing these requirements, the main goal of Army communities in Europe is to continue to provide the same quality services and support to Soldiers and families stationed here, officials said. (Courtesy of the Installation Management Agency-Europe Public Affairs Office)



Photo by Karl Weisel

Talking over tough topics

DoDDS puppeteers Jennifer and Daniel L'Esperance help their friends Brenda and Raymond discuss issues of concern with students at Wiesbaden's Aukamm Elementary School. The Heidelberg teachers brought their Kids on the Block presentation to schools throughout the 104th ASG. See page 26 for the story.

Cracking down on shoplifters

AAFES officials warn Soldiers not to risk careers, integrity

More than 120 Soldiers were apprehended for shoplifting from Army and Air Force Exchange Service facilities in Iraq between Jan. 1 and March 31. These shoplifting cases equated to more than \$34,000 of lost merchandise and an incalculable loss in integrity, careers and respect, AAFES officials said.

The worst part, according to David Drake, AAFES Iraq loss prevention area manager, is that most of the Soldiers apprehended had enough money on hand to pay for the items they stole. They just didn't think they'd get caught.

"Most of our stores have some kind of surveillance,"
See Shoplifters on page 4



Wowing them at the Army Soldier Show

Heather Jenkins (photo far left) and fellow performers entertain community members at the U.S. Army Soldier Show in Hanau's Fliegerhorst Fitness Center May 16. Hundreds of Soldiers, civilians and family members turned out for the touring production which was also featured in Baumholder May 21 and Wiesbaden May 23.

Photos by Dennis Johnson

Commentary

Second thoughts

Staying safe when traveling

Summertime means travel time for many people.

But along with making travel plans, everyone should take a few precautions to ensure trips are free of bad memories such as falling victim to thieves.

Plan how you will carry your money during a vacation. Taking a small bag which can be hung around your neck and tucked out of sight under your clothes is one way to conceal cash, credit cards and important documents such as a passport or driver's license. Only take along documents that are absolutely needed and small amounts of cash.

When camping or staying in a hotel consider paying a few extra Euros to use the safe provided at the reception. That way you can leave documents and money in the safe while sightseeing or going shopping.

If traveling by car, make sure to stow all luggage and other items out of sight in the trunk when leaving the vehicle alone for any amount of time. Always be sure to roll up all windows and lock all doors.

The same applies to your residence at home. Having a neighbor check on your barracks, quarters or apartment while you are away is a good way to discourage burglars from visiting. Ensuring all windows and doors are locked but curtains and shades are left in their normal open positions can also help prevent a thief from becoming interested in your vacant dwelling. Having someone pick up your mail from time to time and to turn your lights on and off can also create the illusion that your residence remains inhabited while you are absent.

Always be aware of your surroundings, avoid large groups of people that may become unruly and stay out of badly lit, barely populated areas where you may stand out as a stranger. Have a great vacation and stay safe.

Register to vote now

Don't wait until the last minute to register to vote or request an absentee ballot to vote in this year's federal election. Voting assistance officers are available throughout the 104th Area Support Group or individuals can go online to visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program website for information and to request an absentee ballot.

Absentee ballots can be applied for by filling out the federal postcard application, Standard Form 76, which is available on the website.

Visit www.fvap.gov for more information.

Write letters to the editor

Got something on your mind you'd like to share with other readers of the *Herald Union*? Have an opinion about something that's going on in the world around you or that you read in the pages of this newspaper?

How about sharing your thoughts with other readers by sending a letter to the editor. Mail letters to 104th Area Support Group, Attn: Herald Union, Unit 20193 Box 0001, APO AE 09165, or send an email to hesherald@104asgexch.hanau.army.mil.

You can also comment on services and support throughout the 104th ASG by visiting the 104th ASG's home page at www.104thasg.hanau.army.mil and clicking on "Customer Feedback."



Meeting under the oak tree

Commentary by Gen. B.B. Bell
U.S. Army Europe commander

A young Soldier was killed in a Privately Owned Vehicle crash early last Friday while making a 360-mile, round-trip journey in bad weather after a full day of work.

The accident is under investigation. It appears that the Soldier, who was traveling alone, had driven many hours to take care of personal business and was trying to return before the start of the next duty day.

This death could have been prevented. Any of the risk factors involved — darkness, fatigue, bad weather, traveling alone, unrealistic time schedule — should have raised a red flag. Apparently the Soldier made the tragic mistake of assuming the benefits of the trip outweighed the risks. Communication between leaders and their Soldiers helps prevent Soldiers from taking unnecessary risks such as this.

Leaders at all levels must use the tools at their disposal to prevent needless deaths like this. One such tool is an inherent leadership responsibility: the need to talk to subor-



ordinates who are planning trips or other off-duty activities.

That being said, communication is a two-way street. Soldiers must discuss their travel plans with their squad-level or first-line supervisory noncommissioned officers and jointly assess the risks involved. My Memorial Day weekend memorandum, which is available on the USAREUR home page, calls this process "meeting under the oak tree."

This meeting requires Soldiers to voice specific measures they plan on taking when traveling, based on the risk assessment they and their leaders determine together. Leaders bear an enormous responsibility for the welfare of their Soldiers. This special trust in the lives of our Soldiers is not a day-job; it applies around the clock, 365 days a year.

Soldiers also have a special responsibility to their leaders, to their comrades and to themselves to consider their own safety. I expect leaders to talk to their Soldiers, but I also expect Soldiers to seek out their leaders to discuss travel plans and other off-duty activities.

These "meetings under the oak tree" are not optional. They are essential to upholding the concept of "Soldier hard, Soldier safe," and to ensuring that we continue to execute with excellence Any Mission, Anywhere.

Speed, alcohol, fatigue can kill

With summer just around the corner, V Corps Soldiers, civilian employees and families in Germany will soon be basking in the delights of outdoor recreation. But even the fun season comes with its own set of hazards.

The biggest hazards of summer relate to driving. Over the last three summer seasons, 59 percent of all accidents in V Corps were vehicle-related, according to V Corps Safety Office statistics. As with most potentially hazardous activities, knowing what the risks are and what to beware of is half the battle in avoiding injury. Speed, fatigue and alcohol are the causes of most accidents.

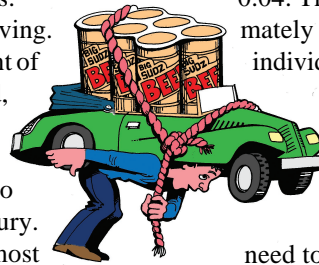
Approximately 100 million adult Americans drink alcoholic beverages, a behavior largely accepted in today's society. Most adults recognize that drinking and driving is irresponsible behavior; however, some adults — and underage teens — still choose to drink and drive. One result is that 55 percent of all fatal car accidents involve alcohol use.

Many people do not know in detail the effects alcohol has on the ability to drive safely. Alcohol is a depressant that affects the central nervous system, slowing brain and spinal cord activity. Reaction time and coordination are considerably impaired with increasing intoxication.

Blood Alcohol Content is defined as grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood. The larger a driver's body, the greater his or her blood supply. In consequence a big person can drink the same quantity of an alcoholic beverage as a smaller person and yet have a lower BAC.

Drinking and driving don't mix

In U.S. Army Europe, a driver stopped with a BAC level of 0.05 percent can have his or her driver's license suspended. At a level of 0.1 percent, the license is permanently revoked. German drinking and driving laws are much harsher. For the German Polizei, a BAC of 0.03 is the legal limit.



A normal 160-pound person, drinking two drinks in an hour — 12 ounces of beer, five ounces of wine or one-and-a-half ounces of liquor per drink — will have a BAC of about 0.04. The body eliminates alcohol at a rate of approximately one drink per hour, though actual rates vary by individual.

The best defense against alcohol-related accidents is to drink moderately and not drive after drinking. Other ways to help avoid drunk-driving accidents include:

- ★ Planning celebrations that eliminate the need to drive.
- ★ Urging friends not to drive if they have had too much to drink.
- ★ Letting someone be a designated driver.

Fatigue can take deadly toll

An exhausted driver can be just as deadly as one who drinks. It's a problem that is exacerbated in the summer months, when heat and physical activity before driving can cause fatigue to set in more quickly.

There are some things drivers can do to help increase their chances of staying alert:

- ★ Drink plenty of nonalcoholic liquids to stay cool.
- ★ Open the window periodically to build up the interior oxygen level.
- ★ Eat lightly before driving.
- ★ Keep your composure. Getting steamed just makes it harder to think clearly and drive safely.
- ★ Vary your route.
- ★ Plan on resting.

Even if a driver does all he or she can to stay awake, sometimes the body just plain needs rest. A driver who evidences symptoms of fatigue may be in danger of falling asleep at the wheel. Pull safely off the road and get some rest. (Courtesy of the V Corps Safety Office)

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News and features

Newsflash...Newsflash

Sexual Assault Task Force findings

The Department of Defense Task Force on Care for Victims of Sexual Assaults indicated the following: **X** DoD policies and standards focus on sexual harassment, not sexual assault; **X** the military services' policies lack integration for effective prevention and response; **X** commanders lack guidance, resources and emphasis on prevention and response; **X** victim response capabilities lack sufficient resources and uniform guidance; **X** efforts to hold offenders accountable are not apparent due to Privacy Act concerns. The task force recommended the following to address these issues: (✓ — immediate) Establish a single point of accountability to address sexual assault matters and develop strategic courses of action on critical, unresolved issues; (✓ — near term) Develop DoD policies for prevention, reporting, response and accountability, and develop an integrated strategy for sexual assault data collection; (✓ — long range) Establish institutional sexual assault program evaluation and oversight mechanisms. (DoD News)

Iraq casualties

Sgt. Brud J. Cronkrite, age 22, of Spring Valley, Calif., and Friedberg's 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, died May 14 in Baghdad from injuries he sustained the day before in Karbala when a rocket propelled grenade was fired into a building near him during a security patrol. **Spc. Philip I. Spakosky**, age 25, of Browns Mill, N.J., and Friedberg's 1-37th Armor, died May 14 in Baghdad of injuries sustained May 13 in Karbala when he was shot by a suspected sniper. **2nd Lt. Leonard M. Cowherd**, age 22, of Culpeper, Va., and Friedberg's 1-37th Armor, died May 16 in Karbala when he received sniper and rocket propelled grenade fire while securing a building near the Mukhayam Mosque.

Supply Excellence

Kudos to Wiesbaden's 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion, winners in the Category B Level II category; Hanau's 71st Maintenance Company, winners MTOE Level I; and Hanau's 26th Quartermaster Supply Company, MTOE Level II winners, at the U.S. Army Europe-level of the 2003 Department of the Army Supply Excellence Competition. Units were slated to receive their

awards May 27 in Heidelberg. (USAREUR Public Affairs)

DoD's top broadcasters

Congratulations to the American Forces Network's **Staff Sgt. Scott Malone** for placing first in the Radio Newscast category and **AFNEurope** for placing first in the Regional Television Newscast category of the 2003 Department of Defense Thomas Jefferson competition.

Reaching veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs is expanding its efforts to reach veterans of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to ensure they are aware of benefits they have earned. Anthony J. Principi, VA secretary, is sending personal letters to more than 150,000 veterans of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom who recently separated from the military to thank them for their service and to remind them of their eligibility for VA health care and other benefits. The letter includes brochures and directions to the VA's web pages at www.va.gov containing more details about VA benefits, including the opportunity to apply for benefits online. VA officials said they expect to mail about 10,000 letters a month as more veterans leave active duty. (VA News)

AAFES moving aid

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service offers access to a new Military Moving Center service on its website at www.aafes.com through QCorps. Authorized AAFES customers moving into or residing at any address in the United States can log on to the site to compare and purchase utilities, telephone, video, Internet access and other essential household services. "The Military Moving Center, developed and operated by QCorps, enables military consumers to conveniently compare and purchase household services online in a matter of minutes," said Maj. Gen. Kathryn Frost, AAFES commander. More than 400 service providers are featured. (AAFES Release)

Savings Bonds

Help prepare for the future by investing in your children and the nation through U.S. Savings Bonds. Bonds may entitle you to tax benefits if used to pay for your child's college education. Contact your community bank for more information. (Courtesy of the Community Bank)

Getting an Arabic headstart

Class helps Soldiers bridge cultural divide

"Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat."

—Rudyard Kipling, "Ballad of East and West"

By David Ruderman
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Central Texas College has opened the door for Soldiers and their supporters to make their first acquaintance with the Arabic language and Muslim culture. A series of two-day introductory classes given in Hanau and Baumholder covers the basics of the geography, history and cultural customs of Iraq, and an introduction to the local Arabic dialect.

"What came out of a college planning session was the need for an Arabic language and culture training," said Steve Myers, education services officer for the 222nd Base Support Battalion in Baumholder. "We sort of initiated it. This was completely new."

The curriculum is derived from that of the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., said Jennifer Arnold, language program manager for CTC's Mannheim region. She compiled the curriculum with the help of a native, Arabic speaking instructor.

"We stuck to counting, question words: who, when, where and what. We went over phrases: 'Lay down your weapons,' 'Are you armed?' We played word games, word poker, word bingo. Our Baumholder ESO said they should have been doing this the whole year," said Arnold.

Five courses were offered in Baumholder in December and January that attracted upward of 200 Soldiers, many of them scheduled to deploy to Iraq, she said. A class in



Photo by David Ruderman

Sawsan Chahrour (center), originally from Damascus, Syria, instructs Susan Conrique (left) and Sgt. Adriana Silvestru of 55th Personnel Service Battalion in the use of basic Arabic phrases.

mid-April had over 50 participants.

"They were new Soldiers who had arrived and were preparing to go downrange, usually just prior to their going. We built the course on trying to give them some basic survival skills, and not get themselves in trouble," said Myers.

Commanders can arrange sessions for their units by contacting CTC, said officials. The class is also open to family members and civilians. "It's individuals, and it's not necessarily Soldiers," said Demetra Malone, education services officer with the 414th BSB in Hanau. "It can be civilians, family members... and it's free."

"Baumholder and Hohenfels held theirs when Soldiers were actually leaving, so that makes a difference. I told the commander I should have done this earlier, but she said it's OK, they're going to be rotating back and forth," said Malone.

Participants do not need to learn the Arabic alphabet — words and phrases are transliterated into the common Roman script in which most Western languages are written. In addition to exercising the basics of Iraqi dialect, students learn about the geography, climate and ethnic composition of the country. The historical background, its ancient roots and its modern political his-

tory since the end of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, are covered as well.

"But it was very non-political — we just put the facts out there," said Arnold. "We did the history thing and a religion thing, just general and nonjudgmental."

Cultural clues can be unspoken, and the course tries to cover them as well. "There are about six ways to say 'No,' all with body language," said Arnold.

Soldiers pick up the language surprisingly well, said instructor Faten Rahmouni. "They're very good actually. I was surprised by their pronunciation. They can really pronounce the sounds. I've worked with Germans and they have a completely different approach — the Soldiers are much better. A lot of them speak Spanish and it helps with the 'r' sound we have in Arabic. And they liked it. It was really amazing."

"We think it was very effective, but to say 'Did it help?' — we can't say that," said Myers. "The Soldiers in Iraq will only know from experience whether it made a difference on the ground."

A class will be offered in Hanau June 28-29. Call mil 322-8380 to register. For information and registration assistance for the next class in Baumholder call mil 485-7557/6308.

Warm Wiesbaden welcome

The confetti flies as Staff Sgt. Richard Mills is greeted by his wife Bethany Ann Mills at Wiesbaden Army Airfield. Members of the Army Reserve's 1st Armored Division Detachment (Rear Operations Center) based at Wiesbaden Army Airfield, returned home from Iraq after serving for more than a year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "These Soldiers and their families have sacrificed so much and we're just glad they're all home safely," said Col. Albert J. Gardner, G-1 for the 7th Army Reserve Command, during the ceremony.

Photo by Spc. David Seale



News and features

Fire departments get 'tilt-hook' trucks

New equipment increases response capabilities in event of fires, weapons of mass destruction or hazardous spills

Installation Management Agency-Europe fire departments received new "tilt-hook" trucks last week that are critical to modernizing emergency response capabilities across the command, officials said.

Unlike traditional fire trucks, the flat-bed vehicles have their own electronic cranes to place one of an assortment of emergency response containers on the back, depending on the nature of the accident or incident.

"We are setting the pace for a smart equipment approach to emergencies in the future," said Sigurd Mack, IMA-E fire protection specialist, who is spearheading the modernization effort for U.S. Army fire departments in Europe.

"Instead of having regular fire trucks and other special purpose, low-use vehicles, the



New tilt-hook trucks coming into the IMA-E inventory will modernize U.S. Army fire stations in Europe, providing them flexibility in the future to upload different emergency response containers, depending on the type of accident or incident, officials said.

tilt-hook trucks can be tailored with separate containers with water for firefighting or the equipment for situations involving hazardous materials or weapons of mass destruction or rescue missions," he said. "This modu-

lar approach gives us the flexibility to adapt quickly to different scenarios."

In addition, Mack said, he estimated the containers alone will save up to \$50,000 per type of response package over the cost of

traditional response vehicles. Plus the tilt-hook truck provides a truck chassis that can be used over and over for different contingencies.

Of 17 U.S. Army fire stations in Europe, three already have the new trucks with 11 more to be delivered in the weeks ahead. The other three locations will receive theirs later this year.

Money for the new equipment came from the U.S. Army Europe fiscal year 2003 and 2004 budgets with a total of \$6.8 million dedicated to acquiring the tilt-hook trucks, containers for weapons of mass destruction and related training for firefighters.

Mack said he saw the WMD containers as part of the evolution of the role of firefighters as first responders.

"Firefighters are available 24/7. We respond to all sorts of situations, and as potential threats in the world become more sophisticated, so must we," Mack said.

WMD containers, which provide protective gear for first responders and decontamination capabilities, will also be arriving in the months ahead.

"We are using technology as much as possible to be as prepared as possible," he said.

Shoplifters

Continued from page 1

whether it's cameras, detectives or both," said Drake. "My estimation is that on any given day, we catch a 10th of the people who steal from AAFES. If you shoplift repeatedly, you will eventually get caught. I wonder if those Soldiers ask themselves if their military career is worth a one in 10 shot of getting caught?"

Drake and Rich Cabbage, Baghdad loss prevention man-

ager, said they have heard all kinds of reasons and excuses as to why Soldiers steal, but the one they hear the most is, "I forgot I had it." "I was going to pay for it later," is another, said Cabbage, who has frequently caught more than one person a day. "I've detained everyone from privates to majors," he said.

The things people steal make Cabbage and Drake raise their eyebrows. They said once they caught a coalition Soldier who stole four pairs of gloves — each on separate occasions — but only took the left-handed glove. Recently, said Cabbage, it was light bulbs. "They were stealing the light bulbs out of the mini-Mag-Lites. They left the flashlight and stole the bulb," he said.

"Even if someone only takes a part of the item, it's still shoplifting," said Drake. "Shoplifting is stealing any item or part of an item, or changing the price to pay less than it is marked."

When Drake, Cabbage or the many loss prevention specialists throughout AAFES facilities observe someone shoplift, they will watch the person until they exit the building. Then they will stop them, identify themselves, ask for an ID, explain why they stopped them and escort them to their office. There they call the Military Police and wait for them to arrive and take control of the individual.

"We start our paperwork and for the most part, they sit quietly. Most realize it will make the situation worse if they get belligerent. But some do," said Cabbage. The loss prevention specialist also explained the civil recovery act. "We charge all U.S. military and their supporters a \$200 fee per shoplifting incident. They can pay that on the spot, which some do, or they can make payments in an allotted amount of time," said Drake.

When the MPs arrive, they will take statements, recover the items and release individuals back to their unit for Uniform Code of Military Justice action. Whatever action the unit takes, "they're going to lose a heck of a lot more in pay than what the item was worth. Add to that the loss of their

career, and it's just not worth it," Drake said.

Cabbage listed their most shoplifted items as CDs, video games, electronics, DVDs, sunglasses and Soldier-accessory items such as head wraps and Buttstock ammunition holders.

In addition to the cameras and detectives, Cabbage said the locally hired workers also watch out for shoplifters. "We lock the high-ticket stuff up and train the entire work force to watch and ask questions."

Associates at contingency operations are trained to look for more than just shoplifting. The workers also stay on the lookout for counterfeit bills. "In my 17 years in loss prevention I've had maybe three cases of detaining people passing counterfeit money. Here (in Iraq), I got three people in three days. All three knowingly passed the money," Drake said.

"Our cashiers are very good at catching counterfeit bills. Most can tell by touch. We've had at least 15 instances in the Baghdad area. We hand those Soldiers and the money directly to the Criminal Investigation Command which hands them to the Secret Service for investigation. That's an instant felony," Cabbage said.

In addition to shoplifting and passing counterfeit bills, AAFES loss prevention specialists have detained Soldiers for trying to return shoplifted items for refund at a later date, for passing bad checks and for credit card fraud.

"Our job is loss prevention. And knowing that we catch 10 percent of all shoplifters, I'd rather deter the other nine from stealing," Drake said. "You might get away once, but eventually you're going to get caught. It's not worth the risk. There's nothing in that store worth risking your military career."

"AAFES gives all customers a chance to pay for merchandise. After they leave the store, it's too late. AAFES has a 100 percent prosecution rate. It's up to the Military Police to determine the reality of if they stole, not us," said Cabbage. "We have to turn everyone in," said Drake. "We prosecute them all," Cabbage said. (AAFES News Release)



Photo by Spc. Peter Holzer

Spotlight on history

Sgt. Jeffrey Miller, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery, models a Vietnam-era uniform during the 5-7th ADA Spring Ball in Hanau May 14. Miller was among seven 5-7th ADA Soldiers who presented uniforms from the past.